

U.S. Gets 'Proof' of Che's Death

From News Dispatches

U.S. officials were reported yesterday to have received what they consider positive proof that the Bolivians are correct in their claim that they have slain guerrilla leader Ernesto Che Guevara.

The Bolivian army originally announced that Guevara was shot in a clash with soldiers last Sunday. Washington spokesmen said then they were inclined to believe the Bolivian government reports. But recent La Paz dispatches have tended to throw some mystery over the affair.

A small group of U.S. specialists has been training Bolivian forces in antiguerrilla operations and was reported in La Paz to have been in a position to make an independent verification of the Bolivian claim.

It was understood that the results, including fingerprint

identification, have arrived in Washington and that responsible U.S. authorities now are fully satisfied the body shown by the Bolivians was that of the Argentine-born Guevara, who once was a top deputy to Cuba's Fidel Castro.

A State Department spokesman refused yesterday to go beyond a statement made by Secretary Dean Rusk at his Thursday news conference.

"I have no personal, independent proof" that Guevara was killed, Rusk said. "But on the other hand, I have no reason whatever to doubt the reports which have come in from the Bolivian government."

Meanwhile, the brother of Guevara yesterday denied as "a farce" the Bolivian claim that the guerrilla leader was killed.

Roberto Guevara returned to Argentina from Bolivia where he had gone to see his

brother's body, only to be told that it had been cremated.

Bolivian officials displayed photographs of Guevara and allowed newsmen to view the body. But Roberto said, "I cannot affirm that the body was exhibited and pictures of it were my brother."

"I think I can go as far as affirming that it was not, because the Bolivian government tried to hinder me in all ways from the time of my arrival."

While the controversy over Guevara's death continued, Bolivian troops killed four members of a guerrilla band, the army command announced yesterday.

A spokesman said troops and guerrillas clashed five miles north of Higuera, in the area where Guevara was killed on Oct. 8. The guerrillas were identified as a Cuban who headed the band's medical staff, a Peruvian and two Bolivians.